

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

Vol. 40 No. 2

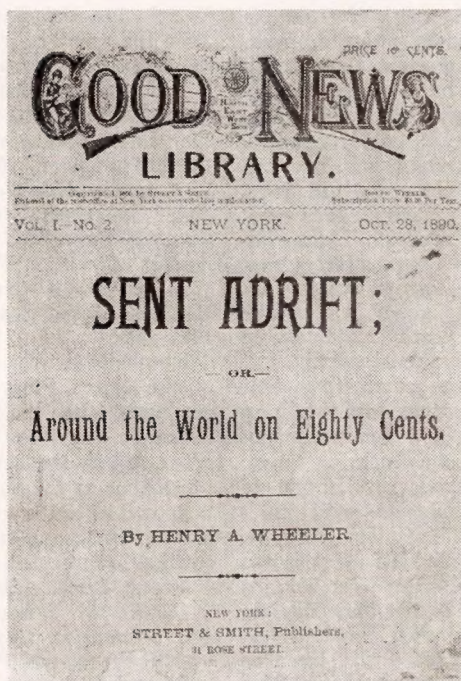
February 15, 1971

Whole No. 461

The Anatomy of Dime Novels

No. 21 Stories of Polar Exploration

By J. Edward Leithead



DIME NOVEL SKETCHES NO. 134

GOOD NEWS LIBRARY

Publisher: Street & Smith, 31 Rose Street, New York, N. Y. Issues: 12.
Size: 8x5¼ inches. Pages: 64. Price: 10c. Schedule of Issue: Weekly.
Dates: October 21, 1890 to January 6, 1891. Illustrations: Numerous black and white illustrations but cover without illustration as above. Contents: Adventure stories for the younger set, mostly reprints from the Golden Library.

The Anatomy of Dime Novels

No. 21 Stories of Polar Exploration

By J. Edward Leithead

Polar exploration was, in my younger days, an often repeated tale, with two famous names striving to be first to reach the North Pole—Peary and Cook. It takes a stout-hearted and rugged man to brave the icebound Arctic Circle, and yet I think the desolation of the frozen north would be much less of an ordeal than the recent experience of the hardy trio in the crippled Apollo 13, who might have been forever lost in space.

The hazards attending adventure in the land of ice and snow, as related in the dime novel, didn't interfere with the popularity of such tales among youthful readers. From a check-up of titles it is apparent that Frank Tousey published more tales of der-ring-do while searching for the North Pole—and the South Pole as well—than any other publisher of dime and nickel thrillers in the good old days.

Many stories of many kinds that appeared in the Tousey black-and-white publications, particularly that good serial paper *Happy Days*, were reprinted with color covers in that fine adventure weekly *Pluck and Luck*. In order not to repeat unnecessarily, yet give the collector as complete a listing as I know, I'll mention first those *Happy Days* serials which were not repeated in *Pluck and Luck*:

Adrift in the Arctic, or, Bound to Reach the North Pole, 459-462; 1062-1065; 1526-1528; Bob, the Ice King, or, Out to Find the Pole, 797-800; Blown to the Arctic, or, The Boy Who Bought the Balloon, 573-576; The Boy Explorer, or, Abandoned in the Land of Ice, 19-24; Caught in the North, or, The Boy Castaways of Greenland, 853-858;

1369-1372; Driven to the Pole, or, Lost in the Land of Ice, 879-882; 1346-1349; Farthest South, or, Two Boys Who Reached the Pole, 562-565; 1159-1162; In the Land of Red Snow, or, The Boy Castaways of the Arctic, 711-714; 1277-1280; The Island of Ice, or, Lost in the Frozen Sea, 910-913; 1429-1432; Lost in the North, or, The Fate of the Boy Explorers, 688-691; 1255-1258; Lost on Mount Erebus, or, A Boy Explorer at the South Pole, 828-831; Ninety Degrees South, or, Lost in the Land of Ice; 542-545; 1120-1123; Out With Amundsen, or, The Search for the South Pole, 919-922; Over the Ice, or, Wrecked in the Arctic, 754-757; Peary's Boy Guide, or, Ice Bound in the Arctic, 591-594; Saved at the Pole, or, The Rescue of the Lost Explorers, 984-987; 1456-1459; Snowbound for Two Years, or, Lost in the Heart of Greenland, 659-662; 1196-1199; Under the Midnight Sun, or, Two Boys' Adventures in the Arctic Circle, 727-730; 1230-1233; Wrecked at the North Pole, or, The Mystery of the Lost Whaler, 901-904; 1424-1427.

Frank Reade, Jr., joined in the quest of the North Pole, but not by ordinary means, not the hard way that less inventive explorers must seek it and often fail in the attempt. He invented something special to invade the frozen north more or less safely, as the following black-and-white Tousey publications tell in full detail:

Frank Reade Library

17—Frank Reade, Jr.'s New Electric Submarine Boat "The Explorer," or, To the North Pole Under the Ice.
61 and 62—Frank Reade, Jr.'s Elec-

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trick Ice Boat, or, Lost in the Land of Crimson Snow.

125—Latitude 90°, or, Frank Reade, Jr.'s Most Wonderful Mid-air Flight.

146—In White Latitudes, or, Frank Reade, Jr.'s Ten Thousand Mile Flight Over the Frozen North.

Beadle & Adams published at least two:

Beadle's Dime Library No. 1019, The Ice King, or, The Fate of the Lost Steamer. A Story of the Frozen North.

Beadle's Boy's Library No. 44, The Lost Boy Whalers, or, In the Shadow of the North Pole. A Tale of Adventure in the Frigid World.

Other tales of "polar exploration" in the Color cover era:

Pluck and Luck (Tousey—all previously serialized in Tousey story papers): Nos. 9, North Pole Nat, or, The Secret of the Frozen Deep; 28, The Frozen Deep, or, Two Years in the Ice; 63, Lost at the South Pole, or, The Kingdom of Ice; 101, Frozen In, or, An American Boy's Luck; 106, In the Ice. A Story of the Arctic Regions; 112, Deserted, or, Thrilling Adventures in the Frozen North; 142, In the Frozen North, or, Ten Years in the Ice; 160, Lost in the Ice; 241, Icebound, or, Among the Floes; 255, In the Sea of Ice, or, The Perils of a Boy Whaler; 284, 83 Degrees North Latitude, or, The Handwriting in the Iceberg; 300, To the North Pole in a Balloon; 322, Twenty Degrees Beyond the Arctic Circle, or, Deserted in the Land of Ice; 338, Ned North, the Young Arctic Explorer, or, The Phantom Valley of the North Pole; 347, Out With Peary, or, In Search of the North Pole; 380, 80 Degrees North, or, Two Years on the Arctic Circle; 396, Beyond the Aurora, or, The Search for the Magnet Mountain; 441, The Arctic Crusoes, or, Lost at the World's End; 464, Lost at the Pole, or, The Secret of the Arctic Circle; 468, The Wreck of the "Columbus," or, Abandoned in the Ice; 521, The Boy Explorers, or, Abandoned in the Land of Ice; 680, Lost Among the Icebergs, or, Phil Brown's Vacation Up North; 771, The Ice Breaker Boys, or, Cutting Their Way to the Pole; 867, The Frozen

Frigate, or, To the North Pole After a Million.

Frank Reade Weekly Magazine (Tousey):

2—Frank Reade, Jr.'s New Electric Submarine Boat "The Explorer"—reprint of Frank Reade Library No. 17.

41—Across Frozen Sea, or, Frank Reade, Jr.'s Electric Snow Cutter.

46—To the End of the Earth, or, Frank Reade, Jr.'s Great Mid-air Flight.

Fame and Fortune (Tousey):

470—Among the Ice Peaks, or, The Voyage That Made the Money.

All Around Weekly (Tousey):

36—Iceberg Jack, the Hero of the Arctic.

69—King of the Ice, or, Astray in the Arctic.

Secret Service (Tousey):

216—The Bradys at Baffin's Bay, or, The Trail Which Led to the Arctic.

378—The Bradys at Hudson's Bay, or, The Search for a Lost Explorer.

Brave and Bold (Street & Smith):

17—The Electric Traveler, or, Underground to the Pole.

67—Beyond the Frozen Seas, or, The Land of the Pigmies.

165—The Lost Captain, or, Skipper Jabez Coffin's Cruise to the Open Polar Sea.

226—Marooned in the Ice, or, Gordon Keith's Arctic Chase.

276—Lost in the Ice, or, Two Boys' Adventures in the Polar World.

Medal Library (Street & Smith):

31—The Cruise of the Snowbird. A Story of Arctic Adventures.

109—A Dash to the Pole.

Dave Fearless Series

4—Dave Fearless Among the Icebergs, or, The Secret of the Eskimo Igloo.

Reprint of a serial in one of Tousey's black-and-white storypapers, King of the Ice, or, Astray in the Arctic, the polar adventure story we are about to explore, was No. 69 of All Around Weekly, Dated Feb. 17, 1911. The author is given as "Harry Lakeland," one of the very obvious pseudonyms used as All Around bylines. It opens with:

"A wild, bleak, desolate spot on the rugged coast of North America, where

the Arctic Circle crosses this almost unknown region. Here is the country of eternal snow and ice, where the north wind has its birth, and where the icy blasts that come tearing down the coast, bringing icebergs in their train, first have their home.

"Here, in the midst of desolation, lived a man in a little hut overlooking a swift stream, one of the arms of the icy Arctic. His hut was built in part of a ship's hull, firmly fixed upon rugged rocks. And once within its walls, the snow lying thick upon the sloping roof and piled high at the openings serving as windows, with polar bearskins to keep him and a younger dweller there warm, they managed to live. The Eskimos called the old fellow 'King of the Ice,' but his name was Royal Grening, once captain of a small whaler that got stuck in the ice, and only he of all aboard had survived.

"It was an evening in September as the fur-clad Grening sat in the doorway of his shelter, watching for the coming of the youth he called 'son,' whom he had rescued from a nursemaid marooned on an ice floe. The woman had fallen overboard from a boat with the child at night and later died from exposure. The sun had disappeared below the horizon; in October it would set not to rise again for many months, although a partial twilight took its place, to last a few weeks longer, until total darkness set in.

"Not too far away across the ice-locked land a shot had announced to Grening that his 'son,' out hunting a polar bear, had been successful and should be making his way homeward with part of his 'kill' across the ice. But he didn't come . . .

"The exploring steamer 'Dart,' Captain Van Ness commanding, was making her way gallantly through the water, bound straight for the Pole, and all hands aboard were full of expectancy. On the 'Dart' was a handsome young fellow of about twenty-four, by the name of Harry Stoner, holding the position of ship's clerk and having made several voyages though not this far north before. He

and his chum Dick Lisle, a young man somewhat older than Harry and the third officer of the 'Dart,' were standing amidships, looking out over the waste of water. Both wore capotes and were well protected from the cold, which was intense even for September.

"Do you know, Dick,' said young Stoner, 'I have always had a desire to come up north, ever since a disaster that occurred some years ago, when I was a youngster.'

"What was that?"

"I had an infant brother lost in these parts, and I have always been anxious to learn his fate.'

"But you just now said he was lost."

"Well, I don't know whether he died or not. He and his nurse were carried away on a cake of ice apparently during the night. My father and mother were at that time passengers on a whaling-vessel, in which dad had an interest, and it was in these latitudes that the disaster took place. I was left at home in charge of my grandfather, my baby brother being with my mother and a nurse aboard the vessel. He wasn't more than six months old. If found by Eskimos he may be alive, but probably isn't—'

"Harry was suddenly interrupted by the voice of the man on the lookout:

"Below there! The pack-ice seems to be bearing down on us!"

"Instantly the captain appeared on deck, scanned the horizon attentively, then shouted:

"All hands on deck! We must get out of this or we shall be nipped!"

"The danger was more imminent than even Captain Van Ness figured. The ice on either hand breaking up—they had been steaming through a lead, an opening—the pack suddenly shifted and began to close upon the 'Dart' with great force. Huge masses piled up all around the steamer and barred the way, while other masses crowded from behind and urged it forward. In vain, the crew tried to force a passage through the ice in front; it only packed higher and thicker before them, like a wall.

"The current boiled and surged beneath the struggling boat, the screws

were clogged by ice and became useless, the steering gear was damaged and ruin stared them in the face. The terrible pack-ice crushed in upon them, they were driven outward, lifted up bodily and caught as between two great jaws whose crushing weight made the timbers creak and groan as if the whole vessel were coming to pieces.

"The keen wind, which had shifted, brought the pack more closely around the 'Dart' and the vessel ceased to move, while tighter and tighter those implacable jaws closed upon her sides, grinding and crushing everything as if it were merely the skeleton framework of a vessel.

"The engineer reported that the seams had been opened, and that the water, rushing in, already threatened to extinguish the fires. The ship was listing badly, threatening to keel over on its side, and all was confusion. The captain ordered out the boats, but several of them had been crushed by the ice, which, piling high above the sides of the ship, had fallen upon and carried them and the davits away.

"Just then two human forms were observed on a bluff some distance off and signals were made to them. Befurred and hooded, they were believed to be Eskimos, and it was thought they might assist in getting the imperiled crew off the steamer. There was need of haste, for the hold was one-third full of water, and should the ice give way beneath them, she would sink to a certainty.

"The two fur-clad figures were seen approaching hurriedly in a sledge drawn by a team of huskies. Before they arrived the fires were out and the lower part of the ship's hold was awash and uninhabitable, the men having fled to the upper deck, carrying away such of their belongings as they were able to save. The ship's sledges were drawn on deck and quickly dropped over the side, being loaded in a disorderly manner by the men who were now out upon the ice. The dogs who drew the sledges were turned loose and away they scampered across the ice to land.

"The two strangers, arriving, pro-
ced

to be the white-bearded Royal Grening, last seen seated in the doorway of his shelter awaiting his son's return from a polar bear hunt. The youth with him was evidently that son, and when Captain Van Ness addressed the elder, 'Are you Englishmen?' Grening replied, 'No, we're Americans. My son Rex left a bear he shot to warn me of the plight of your ship. So we came to help.'

"Thanks to you both,' the captain said heartily. 'My men and I are in bad need of it. Mayhap you have seen a ship caught in the ice before. Do you think there is any immediate danger?'

"If you go to work systematically,' replied Grening, 'you can save much. The pack probably will not loosen for some hours, and there will be light enough.'

"The crew, who had crowded around the captain and the strangers, felt greatly relieved, order came out of chaos and some effective work was done. The stores were gotten out as rapidly as possible and piled upon the ship's sledges. Grening and his son, harnessing the dogs off the boat and using also their own fine dog-team, drove to the shore and deposited the stores in as sheltered a spot as they could find.

"Harry Stoner and Dick Lisle worked as hard as the rest, but occasionally the former found time, when the young stranger chanced to be near, to look fixedly at him and wonder where he had seen him. In a pause in the work, Harry asked the young stranger earnestly:

"What's your name, friend?'

"Rex,' replied the other with a smile. 'That means a king and some day I shall be King of the Ice, as father now is.'

"Harry looked rather astonished, but pressed his search for information. 'Were you wrecked in this region?'

"I was not; I was born and have always lived here.'

"So? How old are you?'

"Seventeen.'

"Is it possible?'

"Do you think I look younger than that?' Rex asked, mistaking the cause

of Harry's astonishment.

"No, no, I was not thinking of that, but of — Does your mother live here too?" pursued Harry.

"No, I have no mother and no recollection of her."

"You were born here?" Harry said cagerly, although the boy had already answered that question. "You are sure of that?"

"Well, I could hardly be supposed to remember the occurrence," returned the lad with a laugh, "but I have always been told I was born in the north and have no reason to doubt the truth of that assertion."

"I did not doubt you. I was only wondering — What is your other name?"

"I have none. I am called only Rex."

"But your father must have two?"

"He never told me of any. No one ever comes here but the Eskimos, and they call him the Ice King."

"Then you never have been anywhere but this desolate region?"

"I have been nowhere else, but I do not call it desolate, it is beautiful. Did not the Creator make it?"

"What answer Harry Stoner might have made to this extremely puzzling metaphysical question will never be known, for at that moment there came a cry of alarm from the men nearest the vessel. The ice had begun to shift again, and the 'Dart' gave a forward lurch as if about to go down. Everybody made a rush for the bank, leaving the doomed ship to her fate."

"There came a series of whiplike reports, a lead opening in the ice in many places, leaving yawning gulfs here and there through which the polar sea waters rushed like a mill-race. Rex seized Harry by the arm and dragged him away, Dick Lisle hurrying after them."

"Captain Van Ness, Grening, the mysterious Ice King, and two of the sailors succeeded in leaping across the swiftly widening gap in the ice. Two others attempting to follow slipped on the parting ice and were engulfed. The second officers of the 'Dart' and several crewmen made it to safety by leaping from floating

cake to cake. One hapless fellow, stiff with cold, wasn't quick enough and was borne under, never to reappear."

"The dogs and two of the sledges, besides the Grening outfit, were saved, but the last two small boats were smashed to flinders, and not more than half the supplies taken off the 'Dart' had escaped sailing downstream on an ice floe. As the last of the fortunate survivors reached land the 'Dart' was seen to rise suddenly, standing almost on end before it plunged to a watery tomb. Of all the crew left alive there wasn't one who didn't realize they were castaways in this land of bitter desolation, their hopes of ever seeing 'the outside' again seeming slim enough. At least, this was their first reaction."

"Igloos are put together quickly by experienced Eskimos and a temporary shelter was provided for the survivors of the 'Dart' for that night, the cabin of the Ice King being too small to accommodate more than Captain Van Ness in addition to its regular occupants."

"The next morning saw them busily at work and in the course of the day, with the materials at hand, parts of the wrecked vessel having been salvaged, a comfortable shelter was made in which they might easily pass the winter in safety. Captain Van Ness, however, proposed that they should at once endeavor to make their way south and reach some settlement before the winter actually set in, and all the men were in favor of this plan."

"If there were any Eskimos near here, they might guide us," Van Ness said to the recluse Grening. "Do you know of any hereabout? You have spent some years in this region, I understand, and," the captain paused, then, with an apologetic grin, added, "I should think you would have left such a bleak, inhospitable country long since. Your son at least should have a chance to live in a more salubrious climate than these frozen tundras."

"We do not mind," Grening replied shortly. "About the Eskimos. You will find a band of them a little to the

northwest of here, but I do not know whether you can hire a guide there.'

"I will take you to the village," offered Rex, stepping forward. 'With our best dog-team and sledge I can make good time, as the wind is not so boisterous today.'

"Will you take me with you?" asked Harry. 'I'd like such a trip, and Dick Lisle, too.'

"There's room for three," nodded Rex.

"Van Ness said to Grening, 'You approve that plan?'"

(to be continued)

RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES CONCERNING DIME NOVELS

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, Sunday, January 3, 1971. MERRIWELL WAS STRAIGHT—WITH "SAND," by Sheward Hagerty. This is a condensation of Mr. Hagerty's article which originally appeared in the Yale Alumni Magazine. (Sent in by Mrs. Edith Leithead.)

COLLECTOR'S WORLD, Box 654, Conroe, Texas 77301. January-February 1971 issue. HORATIO ALGER'S BOY HEROES, by J. Edward Leithead. An excellent article about Alger by the very knowledgeable Mr. Leithead. His articles will be sorely missed.

TV GUIDE, January 2, 1971. DANGER—MIND AT WORK, by Rowland Barber. This article about Tony Randall mentions that CBS considered a TV series based on the life of Ned Euntline, "The man who invented the wild west." It would have made quite a series. Too bad it was cancelled. (Item sent in by Ed Sommers of Prattsville, New York.)

NEWS NOTE

Warder Cadbury writes in that the Swann Galleries offered 90 Merriwell Series for sale at auction. Eventually dime novels will be found for sale in the exclusive sale lists of Sotheby's and Parke-Bernet.

OLD PULP MAGAZINES WANTED

Such as Doc Savage, Shadow, Spider, Unknown, Phantom, Western Story, Wild West, G-8, Wings, "spicy" mags and many others in the all-fiction field. Must be in excellent condition. What have you? Send list and price wanted. No comics or books.

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320. Frank Pavilon, 10806 South Michigan, Chicago, Ill. 60628 (New member)
321. Jack C. McCormac, 98 Crestwood Drive, Clemson, So. Car. 29631 (New)
322. University of Maryland, McKeldin Library, Box S15334, College Park, Md. 20742 (New member)
323. Mrs. A. P. Schneider, 2025 N. 23rd St., Boise, Idaho 83702 (New mem.)
65. Jack Barker, 8260 Jett Ferry Road, Dunwoody, Ga. 30338 (Correction of membership list)

FOR SALE

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Doomed Demons. Grosset & Dunlap. Good condition. Green covers \$2.00

Fifteen Days in the Air. G&D. Back end papers missing. Blue cover 1.00

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Tom Swift and His Motor Cycle. G&D. Loose binding ----- 1.00

Tom Swift in Captivity. G&D. Good cond. ----- 2.00

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Bill Bruce on Forest Patrol. Good cond. A. L. Burt ----- 3.00

BAKER, WILLARD F.

The Boy Ranchers on Roaring River. Cupples & Leon. Good cond. 2.00

BOWEN, R. SIDNEY

Dave Dawson on Convoy Patrol. Saalfeld. Good cond. ----- 1.00

BRECKENRIDGE, GERALD

The Radio Boys Rescue the Lost Alaska Expedition. Burt. Title page missing. Loose covers ----- 1.00

The Radio Boys with the Revenue Guards. Burt. Good ----- 2.00

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Four Afoot. Appleton. Very good ----- 3.00

Four in Camp. Appleton. Very good ----- 3.00

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FOSTER, JAMES K.

Secrets of the Andes. Saalfeld. Good ----- 1.00

GARIS, HOWARD R.

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GORDON, HARRYThe Six River Motor Boys on the St. Lawrence. Burt. Title page
missing. Front end papers missing ----- 1.50**PATCHIN, FRANK GEE**

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Advanced collector of boy's old juveniles needs following hardbacks to complete his library. When quoting, supply publisher, (date if given), condition and price. Many of these I already have, but I am endeavoring to better edition or condition or both.

HORATIO ALGER

Both Sides of the Continent
Dan the Detective
Grand'ther Baldwin's Thanksgiving
Silas Snobden's Office Boy
Tattered Tom — Loring
Randy of the River — Chatterton & Peck
Lost at Sea — Merston
Ben Logan's Triumph — C&L

RALPH HENRY BARBOUR

Barclay Back — Appleton 1942
Coxswain of the Eight — Appleton 1922
The Lost Dirigible — Appleton 1920
My Dog's Story — Dodd-Mead 1920
Boy's Book of Dogs — Dodd-Mead 1928

ALLEN CHAPMAN

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H. H. CLARK

Boy Life in the U. S. Navy — LL&S

GEORGE BIRD GRINNEL

Jack in the Rockies — Stokes
Jack the Young Cowboy — Stokes

ISABEL HORNIBROOK

From Keel to Kite — LL&S
Camp & Trail — LL&S

ALVAH MILTON KERR

Young Heroes of Wire and Rail

D. LANGE

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